

TAFT'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

(Continued From Page Seven.)

ness, and the fifteenth amendment attempted to secure the negro against any deprivation of the privilege to vote because he was a negro. The thirteenth and fourteenth amendments have been generally enforced and have secured the objects for which they were intended. While the fifteenth amendment has not been generally observed in the past, it ought to be observed, and the tendency of southern legislation today is toward the enactment of electoral qualifications which shall square with that amendment.

No Repeal of Fifteenth Amendment. Of course the more adoption of a constitutional law is only one step in the right direction. It must be fairly and justly enforced as well. In time both will come. Hence it is clear to all that the domination of an ignorant, irresponsible element can be prevented by constitutional laws which shall exclude from voting both negroes and whites not having education or other qualifications thought to be necessary for a proper electorate. The danger of the control of an ignorant electorate has therefore passed. With this change the interest which many of the southern white citizens make in the welfare of the negroes has been revived. The colored men must base their hope on the results of their own industry, self-restraint, thrift and business success as well as upon the aid and comfort and sympathy which they may receive from their white neighbors of the south. There was a time when northern men who sympathized with the negro in his necessary struggle for better conditions sought to give to him the suffrage as a protection and to enforce its exercise against the prevailing sentiment of the south. That movement proved to be a failure. What remains is the fifteenth amendment to the constitution and the right to have statutes of states specifying qualifications for electors subjected to the test of compliance with that amendment. This is a great protection to the negro. It never will be repealed, and it never ought to be repealed. If it had not been passed it might be difficult now to adopt it, but with it in our fundamental law the policy of southern legislation must and will tend to obey it, and so long as the statutes of the states meet the test of this amendment and are not otherwise in conflict with the constitution and laws of the United States it is not the disposition or within the province of the federal government to interfere with the regulation by southern states of their domestic affairs.

"Negro is Now American." There is in the south a stronger feeling than ever among the intelligent, well to do and influential element in favor of the industrial education of the negro and the encouragement of the race to make themselves useful members of the community. The progress which the negro has made in the last fifty years from slavery, when his statistics are reviewed, is marvelous and it furnishes reason to hope that in the next twenty-five years a still greater improvement in his condition as a productive member of society, on the farm and in the shop and in other occupations, may come. The negroes are now Americans. Their ancestors came here years ago against their will, and this is their only country and their only flag. They have shown themselves anxious to live for it and to die for it. Encountering the race feeling against them, subjected at times to cruel injustice growing out of it, they may well have our profound sympathy and aid in the struggle they are making. We are charged with the sacred duty of making their path as smooth and easy as we can. Any recognition of their distinguished men, any appointment to office from among their number, is properly taken as an encouragement and an appreciation of their progress, and this just policy shall be pursued.

"The Appointment of Negroes." But it may well admit of doubt whether in case of any race an appointment of one of their number to a local office in a community in which the race feeling is so widespread and acute as to interfere with the ease and facility with which the local government business can be done by the appointee is of sufficient benefit by way of encouragement to the race to outweigh the recurrence and increase of race feeling which such an appointment is likely to engender. Therefore the executive in recognizing the negro race by appointments must exercise a careful discretion not thereby to do more harm than good. On the other hand, we must be careful not to encourage the mere pretense of race feeling manufactured in the interest of individual political ambition.

No Race Feeling in White House. Personally I have not the slightest race prejudice or feeling, and recognition of its existence only awakens in my heart a deeper sympathy for those who have to bear it or suffer from it, and I question the wisdom of a policy which is likely to increase it. Meaning, if nothing is done to prevent, a better feeling between the negroes and the whites in the south will continue to grow, and more and more of the white people will come to realize that the future of the south is to be much benefited by the industrial and intellectual progress of the negro. The exercise of political franchises by those of his race who are intelligent and well to do will be acquiesced in, and the right to vote will be withheld only from the ignorant and irresponsible of both races.

The Labor Question. There is one other matter to which I shall refer. It was made the subject of great controversy during the election and calls for at least a passing reference now. My distinguished predecessor has given much attention to the cause of labor, with whose struggle for better things he has shown the sincerest sympathy. At his instance congress has passed the bill fixing the liability of interstate carriers to their

employees for injury sustained in the course of employment, abolishing the rule of fellow servant and the common law rule as to contributory negligence and substituting therefor the so called rule of comparative negligence. It has also passed a law fixing the compensation of government employees for injuries sustained in the employ of the government through the negligence of the superior. It also passed a model child labor law for the District of Columbia. In previous administrations an arbitration law for interstate commerce and their employees and laws for the application of safety devices to save the lives and limbs of employees of interstate railroads had been passed. Additional legislation of this kind was passed by the outgoing congress.

I wish to say that, in so far as I can, I hope to promote the enactment of further legislation of this character. I am strongly convinced that the government should make itself as responsible to employees injured in its employ as an interstate railway corporation is made responsible by federal law to its employees, and I shall be glad, whenever any additional reasonable safety device can be invented to reduce the loss of life and limb among railway employees, to urge congress to require its adoption by interstate railways.

Use of Injunctions Necessary. Another labor question has arisen which has awakened the most ardent discussion. That is in respect to the power of the federal courts to issue injunctions in industrial disputes. As to that, my convictions are fixed. Take away from courts, if it could be taken away, the power to issue injunctions in labor disputes, and it would create a privileged class among the laborers and save the lawless among their number from a most needful remedy available to all men for the protection of their business against lawless invasion. The proposition that business is not a property or pecuniary right which can be protected by equitable injunctions is utterly without foundation in precedent or reason. The proposition is usually linked with one to make the secondary boycott lawful. Such a proposition is at variance with the American instinct and will find no support in my judgment, when submitted to the American people. The secondary boycott is an instrument of tyranny and ought not to be made legitimate.

The issuing of a temporary restraining order without notice has in several instances been abused by its advocates to the detriment of the public. I considerate exercise, and to remedy this the platform upon which I was elected recommends the formulation in a statute of the conditions under which such a temporary restraining order ought to issue. A statute can and ought to be framed to embody the best modern practice and can bring the subject so closely to the attention of the court as to make abuses of the process unlikely in the future. American people, if I understand them, insist that the authority of the courts shall be sustained and are opposed to any change in the procedure by which the powers of a court may be weakened and the fearless and effective administration of justice be interfered with. Having thus reviewed the questions likely to recur during my administration and having expressed in a summary way the position which I expect to take in recommendations to congress and in my conduct as an executive, I invoke the considerate sympathy and support of my fellow citizens and the aid of Almighty God in the discharge of my responsible duties.

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